Australian Company to set up a steel manufacturing plant in the country.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Afforestation Drive in Mining Areas

1658. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have begun afforestation drive in the mines in different States; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in that regard in Orissa particularly in Panchapatamali and other bauxite mines in Koraput, Keojhar and Sundargarh districts in that State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Afforestation drive in the mines in different states has been in vogue. Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), a subordinate organisation under Department of Mines being the enforcement authority under Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and rules made thereunder is ensuring afforestation not only within the mining leasehold area but also outside the mining areas. Submission of mining plan for fresh grant of mining lease, renewal of mining lease and existing mining lease is compulsory as per statutory provisions. While examining mining plan, IBM ensures that yearwise afforestation programme is incorporated taking into account the number of trees cut/destroyed due to various mining operations.

Every holder of prospecting licence or a mining lease is required to take measures for plantation not less than twice the number of trees destroyed by reason of any prospecting or mining operations. Further, IBM insists for afforestation on waste dumps, worked out areas and all around the lease hold boundary for stabilisation of dumps, rehabilitation of worked out area and aesthetic environment. As a result around 459 Lac trees have been planted in 735 mines during the period 1989 to March, 1997 covering an area of about 17,141 hectares. In the state of Orissa so far (upto 20.10.98) 311 mining plans have been approved incorporating phased afforestation programme. In Koraput, Keonjhar and Sundergarh districts at present only one bauxite mine at Panchapatamali in Koraput district is reporting production. In this bauxite mine of M/s National Aluminium Co. Ltd. 9,07,700 trees have been planted till March, 1998 with a survival rate of 85%.

Illegal Mining at Paddar Mines

1659. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the illegal mining and smugglers activities at Paddar Mines where the valuable Sapphires are available; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Recently the attention of the Government has been drawn towards the illegal mining in the Paddar sapphires mines.

As per the scheme of Mines & Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 and Rules framed thereunder the main responsibility for checking illegal mining rests with the state Governments. Information sought from the State Government in this regard is awaited. As per information available with the Indian Bureau of Mines, the area was surveyed jointly by Directorate of Geology & Mining, Government of Jammu & Kashmir and J & K Minerals Ltd. (lease holder) and a report was submitted to the State Government. A